

F I R S T
R E P O R T

FROM
SELECT COMMITTEE

ON THE
R O A D

FROM LONDON, BY COVENTRY, TO HOLYHEAD.

(Bridge at Conway.)

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
27 June 1820.*

FIRST REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the state of the Road from *London*, by *Coventry*, to *Holyhead*; into the regulations for conveying His Majesty's Mail between *London* and *Dublin*, and between *Dublin* and the interior of *Ireland*; into the state of the Mail Coach Roads in *Ireland*; and into the regulations for the Conveyance of Coach Parcels and Merchandize between *Holyhead* and *Dublin*; and to report their Observations thereupon, together with the Minutes of the Evidence taken before them from time to time:—HAVE, pursuant to the Order of the House, examined the Matters referred to them, and have agreed to the following REPORT:

YOUR Committee have examined the Report, Plan and Estimate, which have recently been made by Mr. Telford, of a Bridge at Conway, according to the directions of the Commissioners under the 55th Geo. 3, for the improvement of the Roads from London, by Shrewsbury and by Chester, to Holyhead.

In order to bring the subject fully before the House, as to the practicability of constructing such a Bridge, your Committee think it proper to insert Mr. Telford's Report, as follows:

"In consequence of Instructions from the Commissioners for the Holyhead Road, I have examined the River and Shores at and adjacent to the Town of Conway; I have had accurate surveys, trial borings and sections, made at three different places, and am therefore now called to state,—

"First:—With regard to situation; that adjacent to Deyanway, being the first from the river's mouth, the breadth at high water was found to be 900 feet, and at low water 618 feet; the depth at low water was 18 feet; the bottom and sides, instead of being Rock, as generally reported, are wholly composed of Gravel and Sand. Considering the heavy sea to which this place is exposed, that the foundation would be the abovesaid Sand and Gravel, and that all the vessels trading with the Port of Conway would have to pass the Bridge, I am of opinion that this Site is very unsuitable.

"The Second place surveyed was from a projecting Rocky-head, on the Western side of the river, at Bodlender. Here the breadth at high water is 2,043 feet; at low water 460 feet, having 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet at low water; the bottom is Sand and Gravel, from 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 17 feet thick, upon a thin stratum of Marl, below which lies Sand, to an unknown depth. This Site is not so much exposed as the former, but it is still considerably

considerably so; the foundations, except on the Western shore, are equally bad as the former; and it is equally objectionable with regard to the trade of Conway. It is therefore, in my opinion, also an unfit place for a Bridge.

"The Third station surveyed was from the Old Castle, across the Rocky Island, to the present landing beach on the Eastern shore. Here the breadth between the high-water marks on the opposite shores, and including the Rocky Island (taken at a 20-feet tide,) was 2,433 feet; the depth in the channel on the Western side of the Island at low water was 12 feet; in the channel on the Eastern side of the Island 16 feet. By the borings, Rock was found quite across from shore to shore; but on the Western side of the Island there was from 12 to 19 feet of Gravel upon it, and on the Eastern side, from 7 to 27 feet, chiefly loose Sand. The whole of this situation is well protected, and being at the upper extremity of the Town, the Port operations would be left unobstructed, and it would only be for the small craft, which occasionally navigate the upper parts of the river in the Vale of Llanroost, that a passage must be provided. This therefore appears to be much the most suitable place for a Bridge; and here it is certainly quite practicable to construct a safe communication.

"Secondly:—With regard to the most advisable mode of accomplishing this communication, the plan which, after mature consideration, has occurred to me, is to construct an arch of 300 feet, opening over the channel, between the Old Castle and the Island; secondly, on the Western side of the Island, to excavate a space sufficient to let the small craft pass, by means of a Drawbridge; thirdly, to excavate the Rocky Island, so as to leave only a Mound or Roadway; and lastly, to construct a Mound with rubble stone from the Rocky Island to the Eastern shore. This Mound should be raised to about three feet above the line of the highest known tide, and have on each side the Roadway a Parapet wall four feet in height. In estimating the expense of the before mentioned works, there is some degree of uncertainty, because a considerable proportion of it, by the proposed extensive Mound, between the Rocky Island and the Eastern shore, must be constructed upon the before-mentioned deep bed of loose Sand and Gravel, if this bed can be preserved in its present situation, a very considerable portion of the mass of Stone Works may be rendered unnecessary; but in a general estimate, it is prudent to provide for the construction of the whole Mound, because it is very possible the loose Sand may, during the progress of the work, be swept away over the proposed opening of 300 feet. I have found, upon careful estimation, that a Bridge upon the principle of suspension is by much the cheapest, and have therefore adopted it in the following Statement:

" ESTIMATE

	£.	s.	d.
" Iron work, &c. &c. in 300 feet arch masonry, in abutments, retaining walls and parapets, connected with the Bridge and its approaches - - - - -	11,960	2	6
" Drawbridge and abutments - - - - -	1,500	—	—
" Embankment across the Eastern channel and beach, and filling in between the retaining walls, and including making the roadway - - - - -	18,398	15	—
£.	31,858	17	6

"Of the above sum, it has been already observed, that if the Sand and Mud can be preserved in their place, that one-half at least of the embankment might be unnecessary; but this experience alone can determine; and therefore if the Works are undertaken, the constructing the Mound should be let by the cubic yard, and the quantity would then only be paid for as circumstances required.

"If the communications across the River were effected in the manner here described, it would be then necessary to make a new Entrance into the Town of Conway, immediately on the Western side of the Old Castle; and this might incur a further expense of about 2,000 £."

Your

Your Committee do not consider it necessary to enter at length into the various details which serve to show the utility and necessity of this proposed Bridge; it is sufficient to point out to the House, the great importance of the Commercial Correspondence between Ireland and the Northern counties of England, which must be frequently interrupted under the present unavoidable Post Office arrangements, which make it necessary that the Chester Mail should pass the ferry at Conway in the middle of the night. This intercourse forms a very great proportion of the whole British correspondence with Ireland, and according as the London Mail to Holyhead is carried more expeditiously from year to year, as the improvements of the Shrewsbury Road are completed, the difficulty of bringing up the Chester Mail in time for the sailing of the packet necessarily increases. At present the regulations of the Post Office allow the Irish letters to be delivered each morning at Liverpool, so that they may be answered the same day; but unless some means be devised for overcoming the inconvenience of crossing Conway Ferry, either this accommodation must be interfered with, or the London Mail must be delayed, unnecessarily, at Holyhead.

Your Committee are of opinion, that the proposed Bridge is a great national object, and essentially necessary to improve the intercourse between England and Ireland; and in this point of view they conceive it to be a work peculiarly entitled to the support of Parliament.

27 June 1820.

FIRST
REPORT
FROM
SELECT COMMITTEE

OF THE

ROAD

FROM LONDON, BY COVENTRY, TO HOLYHEAD.

(Bridge at Coventry.)

Ordered by The House of Commons, to be Printed,

37 June 1830.
